

SLWG Spotlight: *We're pleased to present...*

Lynn Obermoeller



Lynn Obermoeller
Editor of *Here's News!*

SLWG Member Since 2007

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Lynn Obermoeller is a memoirist and writer specializing in the epistolary form. Currently at work on three novels, she's also the editor/publisher of three quarterly family newsletters and assists in a nonprofit organization's quarterly newsletter. On top of that Lynn is the editor of St. Louis Writers Guild's electronic newsletter, *Here's News!* Lynn also has a passion for gardening and is a member of the North American Rock Garden Society (NARGS). If you want to know more about Lynn, drop her a line and she'll write you back—the old fashioned way.

About Lynn

My latest news: I recently won first place in the Sue Silverman mini-memoir contest sponsored by National Association of Baby Boomer Women for writing a 500-word essay on a life changing experience. I told my daughter I wanted to win second place so I could have Silverman's two autographed books. She wanted to know why I wouldn't want to win the \$100 prize for first place and

then just buy the two books. Smart girl. When I won first place I was shocked. And yes, I bought the two books. If you'd like to read about that life changing moment, you can at:

http://www.boomerwomenspeak.com/display_stories.php?item_id=3089

My current projects: I have three. All are epistolary (letter writing form). The first, *Dear Soldier*, is about a young girl who writes a soldier in the Vietnam war. It is fiction, although it was inspired by my teen years, so it's also part memoir. The second, *Things You Don't Know, Vera* is about a woman who reconnects with her aunt in a nursing home via letters. It too is part fiction and part memoir. The third is memoir, *Dear Mom*, a book of letters to my mother, who died at a young age.

How I come up with my book titles: I originally called my second book *Dear Vera* because the title wasn't important to me at that point - I needed to write it first. I shared *Dear Vera* with my son, who told me it was pretty lame for a title and that it didn't make him want to read the book. After I changed it to *Things You Don't Know, Vera*, he told me that title would intrigue him to open the book. The title could change again. The others will definitely change once they're complete. For now, the titles help me keep the files organized.

My favorite genre: Memoir. I'm experimenting with poetry. Sci-Fi has to be one of my least favorites, but I did attempt to write a story in that genre for my children. I keep trying to write fiction. I think it's good to challenge yourself by writing different genres, but I know my weaknesses.

My research process: When your writing involves personal experience, it's all about getting back into those moments - reliving events and remembering how you felt.

In a memoir piece that was accepted in the University of Pittsburgh's literary journal, *Hot Metal Bridge*, I initially wrote a scene in which my ex-husband was sitting in the back seat of our van. My daughters read the piece before I submitted it and argued that he had actually been sitting in the front seat on that occasion. They called their brother and he agreed with them.

Even though my memory was different, I ended up changing where he sat because it didn't alter the meaning of the overall story. I guess with some memories you can ask others who may have been involved, but ultimately it's your story.

How my upbringing colored my writing: In my house, children were seen and not heard. I was scared to death to talk to my dad, so I wrote him letters. I would write my friends in grade school too. The letter writing was a way for me to communicate. Being shy, it gave me an outlet to express myself.

What inspired me to share my writing: My spiritual path. I was published in my church newsletters and then in a worldwide religious journal. After that, I had more courage to send essays or articles in to publications and contests. It helped me to get the ego out of the way, to know that writing comes from an inner source.

The books that have influenced me most: I was never a reader when I was young. My parents never read and never took us to the library. I went to a parochial school and they didn't have a library. When the book mobile would come once a month, I felt very inferior when stepping foot into that little van. All my classmates seemed to know what to get and what excited them. I walked around like I knew what I was doing and just grabbed anything. I never read the book I picked. When book reports were due, I copied what I could from the inside cover. I'm not sure why I didn't flunk.

When I was an adult, my older sister (an avid reader) insisted I take a book along on a plane ride to Hawaii. I told her I would, but only if she could recommend something that would hold my interest. She handed me *Misery* by Stephen King. I didn't want to put it down. After that, I was hooked and read most everything by Stephen King and anything else anyone would recommend.

What I'm reading now: I just finished *Everything Matters!* by Ron Currie, Jr., *Qualities of Light* by Mary Carroll Moore and *Call of Soul* by Harold Klemp. I love reading Patricia Polacco's (children's) books and just read: *For the Love of Autumn* and *In Enzo's Splendid Gardens*. I read a little before I go to bed and sitting on my night stand is: *Stranger by the River* by Paul Twitchell, *The Spirit of Writing (Classic and Contemporary Essays Celebrating the Writing Life)* edited by Mark Robert Waldman, and *A Year with Rumi* by Coleman Barks.

What I'd change, if I had to do it all over again: I would have studied in English class.

Who inspires me: People who don't give up on their dreams.